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Technical Standards for Matriculation, Progression, and Graduation

University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences

A. Overview

This policy describes the technical standards required for students in the health professions of medicine, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant, medical laboratory science, athletic training and public health. The University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences (UNDSMHS) has a responsibility to society to graduate the best possible healthcare providers. All health profession graduates of this institution must use professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes to function in a wide variety of health care settings and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. The technical standards are designed to ensure the graduation of capable, well rounded and appropriately trained health care providers. (Each professional program may have additional technical standards specific to the requirements of the program.) In order to fulfill this responsibility, UND SMHS has established six areas of competency that must be sufficiently developed to participate in, and to graduate from a health profession's program.

Competency Areas:

1. Health Care/Scientific Knowledge
2. Clinical Skills
3. Ethical and Professional Behavior
4. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
5. Lifelong Learning
6. Healthcare Systems-based Practice and Improvement

The health profession's programs offered at UNDSMHS are academically rigorous with the structured broad general training that is intended to produce "undifferentiated healthcare providers." The school's academic and technical standards are intended to support that model. Whereas a truly undifferentiated healthcare provider may not be achievable, the standards attempt to ensure that health profession graduates of the school possess the background to pursue virtually any area of specialty. Thus all students must meet the academic and technical standards to matriculate, to progress through the curriculum, and to meet the requirements for graduation.

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Academic standards refer to acceptable demonstrations of mastery in various disciplines, before matriculation and after, as judged by faculty members, examinations, and other measurements of performance. Every effort is made to meet the academic needs of the health profession student within the professional program. When a student's ability to perform the technical standards is compromised, the student must demonstrate alternative means and/or abilities to perform the specified tasks. The following technical standards describe the basic competencies essential to successful completion of the health profession programs at UND SMHS.

Beyond the academic standards, students must demonstrate the following technical standards **with or without accommodations**. It is the student's responsibility to identify/disclose any disabilities if requesting any needed accommodations.

Technical Standards and Capacity

In order for a student to adequately address the six competency areas noted earlier, each student must possess the requisite capacities/abilities in the following broad areas:

1. Perception/Observation

To achieve the required competencies in the classroom setting, in the clinical setting, and in the small group setting, students must be able to perceive, assimilate, and integrate information from a variety of sources. Students must be able to perceive and appropriately interpret nonverbal communications.

2. Communication

Students must be able to skillfully communicate through oral, written, and electronic means (in English) with faculty members, health care team members, patients, families, and other students in order to elicit, convey, and clarify information; create rapport; and work collaboratively. Students must be able to clearly speak and hear in order to effectively communicate with patients, including individuals from different cultural and social backgrounds: this includes, but is not limited to the ability to establish rapport with patients and effectively communicate judgments and treatment information.

3. Functional Activities

Students must possess sufficient motor, tactile, and sensory functions in order to attend and participate in activities which are part of the curriculum. This includes production of written and oral communication commensurate with the profession. Depending on the health profession, students are expected to assess patients using all appropriate evaluation tools, diagnostic maneuvers and procedures, perform basic laboratory procedures and tests, and provide patient care appropriate to the circumstances. Students are expected to function in a wide variety of patient care settings, including independent and potentially rapid-paced/high demand environments. Motor, tactile, sensory, and proprioceptive abilities are necessary to perform a complete and thorough

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assessment and intervention plan with the patient. Students must also be able to safely and efficiently utilize equipment and materials necessary to assist patients.

4. Professional and Ethical Behavior

Students must consistently demonstrate the core attributes of professional behavior appropriate to the healthcare field, including commitment to excellence, honesty, integrity, respect for others, empathy, compassion, professional responsibility, social responsibility, and altruism. Students must exhibit the ability to meet the challenges of any medical situation that requires a readiness for immediate and appropriate response without interference of personal or medical problems.

It is the student's responsibility to attend and be able to travel to and from classes and clinical assignments in a timely manner. Students must possess the organizational skills and stamina for performing required tasks and assignments within allotted time frames.

Students must adhere to the policies of the State Board of Higher Education, the University, the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the health profession program, and the clinical/practicum sites. This includes matters ranging from professional dress and behavior to attending the program's academic schedule which may differ from the University's academic calendar and be subject to change at any time.

Students need to take the initiative to address and direct their own learning. They are required to work cooperatively and collaboratively with peers on assigned projects, and participate willingly in the supervisory process involving evaluation of abilities and acquisition of skills. The students will take initiative in becoming a contributory member of a health care team as appropriate for their program and level of education.

5. Cognition

Students must demonstrate critical thinking skills so that they can problem solve, understand abstract ideas, and synthesize information presented in the classroom, laboratory and clinical settings. Students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, process, integrate, synthesize, retain and apply facts, concepts, and data related to the art and science of healthcare. Students must have the cognitive capacity to appropriately utilize technology in the classroom and in the clinical setting. Students must also be able to analyze three-dimensional and spatial relationships. Sound judgment and ethical reasoning as well as clinical reasoning are essential. Students must possess the above abilities to reach diagnostic and therapeutic judgments.

6. Behavioral and Social

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Students must demonstrate emotional stability and be capable of developing mature and effective interpersonal relationships with other students, faculty, and healthcare workers. Students must be able to tolerate physically and emotionally taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. Students must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, accept and integrate constructive criticism, and function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the educational and clinical settings. Students must be able to engage in personal reflection and self-awareness as a mechanism of effective personal growth, development and lifelong learning.

Additional or clarifying technical standards may be required of the individual health profession program. See individual professional program policies for specific details.

Each clinical or practicum site may have additional technical standards that might affect a student's ability to complete clinical placements.

It is the responsibility of the student to request necessary accommodations through university procedures.

If any health profession applicants or enrolled students have a question about whether they can meet these standards due to functional limitations from a disability, they should contact Disability Services for Students (DSS), the campus resource for confidential discussion and support regarding reasonable accommodations:

Disability Services for Students
Room 190 McCannel Hall Stop 9040
Grand Forks, ND 58202 – 9040
dss@und.edu
701 – 777-3425 Voice/TDD
Fax 701 – 777 – 4170